

DAVID BILLET - 09.24.2009 - 12:23 PM

Commentary

The State Department runs a project in Libya called “Governing Justly and Democratically, Investing in People, and Economic Growth.” Earlier this month, State informed Congress that \$2.5 million will be spent in 2009 to advance these goals. But the money will not be directed to, say, groups promoting human rights and private enterprise. Rather, one learns from State’s memo, the lion’s share of the funds will be funneled through agencies of the Libyan government. Then there is \$400,000 for a pair of “nongovernmental organizations”—which happen to be run by, respectively, the son Saif and daughter Aisha of President Muammar Qaddafi.

It takes a special kind of earnestness to believe that the Qadaffi regime, which is the supreme authority on all matters and which controls the oil industry that accounts for 95 percent of the country’s exports, will blazon the path to “transparency,” “business ethics,” and “judicial independence,” to take a few of the aims mentioned by State. The charitable explanation for this Orwellian poppycock is that it is euphemism for bribes that are quietly serving American interests. But as Congressman Mark Kirk of Illinois points out in a letter to the President, it was none other than Saif Qadaffi himself, head of the foundation, that negotiated the release of the Lockerbie murderer and escorted him to his hero’s welcome in Tripoli. He must be laughing all the way to the bank.